“Viele viele Frei(t)räume”

The Prinzessinnengarten and Contemporary Land Use Conflicts in Berlin

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation engages with a land use conflict surrounding the urban community garden (Prinzessinnengarten) in Berlin. This conflict is employed as a case study in order to discuss current dynamics in urban politics and planning in the city. I argue that the conflict is not (only) about an urban community garden but rather one part of a larger discussion regarding the prospect of sub-culture, creativity and “free” spaces in general. Focusing on the claims and visions expressed by the Prinzessinnengarten and its advocates, my research suggests that the direction of Berlin’s Liegenschaftspolitik lies at the heart of this conflict and has received substantial critique due to its one-dimensional privatisation practices and the associated detrimental impacts on the urban realm. Fundamentally, the conflict revolves around the claim for a more “complex” vision for the development of the city based on a holistic and balanced approach in handling city-owned land and properties. This notion derives from the desire for the preservation of use value projects benefitting the general public and the aspiration for non-planned and non-commodified places in the city, where social relations can be formed and new concepts for urban spaces explored. Moreover, the research identifies a rising opposition on the part of cultural producers against the valuation of (sub-)culture, creativity and temporary uses as “competitive asset” while disregarding their contribution to the vitality and sustainability of the urban landscape. Considering the features of the Prinzessinnengarten, their claims and objectives relate in many respects to the concept that academics have recently termed “DIY urbanism”. In this context, this dissertation suggests that scholars should expand the perspective on urban community gardens by building a conceptual bridge to other alternative urban interventions that challenge orthodox concepts of urbanism and apply the concept of “free” spaces. Furthermore, this dissertation focuses on the means that have been employed by the community garden to challenge the privatisation of the site. Following Cox (1998) notion of “spaces of engagement” and de Certeau’s (1984) concept of “tactics”, the findings highlight the significance of local and citywide networks of relevant actors who are able to influence decision-making processes and reveal the necessity to raise the realm of discussion beyond the local in order to shift policy agendas.

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GLOSSARY

*Liegenschaftsfond* The Liegenschaftenfond is a private company owned by the *Land* Berlin and in charge of privatizing city-owned land and properties.

*Liegenschaftspolitik* The Liegenschaftspolitik is a public policy that deals with city-owned land and properties.

*Prinzessinnengärten* The Prinzessinnengärten (‘Princess Gardens’) consist of several urban gardens in Berlin, which are distributed all over the city.

*Prinzessinnengarten* The term Prinzessinnengarten (‘Princess Garden’) is primarily applied in this dissertation, as the research focuses only on the site at Moritzplatz, where the community garden is located, and does not consider other urban gardens.
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“...And then, finally, in late autumn we received the news that the plot of land will be returned to the borough and that the Prinzessinnengärten will be preserved. It was the winter fairy tale of Berlin” (Mayor of Berlin Friedrichshian-Kreuzberg 2013).

Figure 1: Art installation in the Prinzessinnengarten with the title “City of Wishes”. The wish of one respondent was: “Many, many free spaces (free dreams). In German, the injection of a “t” in free spaces implies simultaneously the word free dreams or free visions.
Source: Author’s photo, 2013.
1 INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2012, the Liegenschaftsfond announced its plan to sell the site of what is probably Berlin’s most famous urban community garden, the Prinzessinnengarten. The fate of the community garden would have been just another instance in a series of privatisations of city-owned land and properties in the past ten years, but due to its popularity, the announced sale triggered a highly visible struggle. While, from the perspective of the city’s finance department, the sale would bring much-needed revenue and help to consolidate Berlin’s budget, the Prinzessinnengarten stressed its positive qualities and benefits and argued that it should be considered as being part of the “creative” landscape, which is so feverishly promoted by the city’s branding schemes but which has been gradually undermined by its practices. In public opinion, the urban community garden was not only viewed as a garden in itself but was also perceived as an indication of the direction that public policy would take, which would help to determine the future of other urban spaces that have been and could be re-appropriated for socio-cultural, ecological or political activities. More precisely, it is Berlin’s Liegenschaftspolitik – a policy regulating the handling of common land and properties – that lies at the heart of the conflict and which sparked an unprecedented level of interest and critique, due to the clear privatisation strategy it pursues and the negative impact it has on the urban realm. It was shortly after the notification of the proposed sale that the Prinzessinnengarten started an extensive campaign and adopted several new tactics – including panel discussions, public talks, an open letter to the Berlin Senate and a petition – in order to secure the community garden and its numerous socio-cultural functions. Surprisingly enough, the Prinzessinnengarten managed to successfully halt the privatisation of the plot of land in the summer of 2013 and managed to secure a five-years prospect.

Although urban community gardens have attracted great scholarly attention, studies applying a political-economic framework and investigating struggles over space and contestations around planning and land use have been surprisingly limited to New York City (Schmelzkopf 1995, 2002, Staehele, Mitchell and Gibson 2002, Smith and Kurtz 2003). Using the theoretical lens of the “right to the city”, the struggles in NYC have been framed as claims over the right to space and conflicting values (Schmelzkopf 1995) and have highlighted the significance of expanding the struggle beyond this locality by establishing garden coalitions (Smith and Kurtz 2003). While some of the aspects present in the context of NYC bear resemblance to the case of the Prinzessinnengarten, there seems to be more at stake here than the subject of
urban community gardens per se. The conflict, I argue, is a conflict about the prospect of creative and (sub-)cultural projects in general and whether “free” spaces for experimentation, exploration and encounter will be accepted and preserved in the city. For this reason, it is necessary to expand the perspective beyond that of urban community gardens and link it conceptually to other practices of this kind in order to more fully comprehend their motives and claims. Drawing on literature from urban sociology, cultural and political geography, land use planning and urban politics, the overall objective of this research is to grasp the essential nature of this urban conflict and to understand how it is contextualised within current dynamics of urban planning and politics in Berlin. What is the role of the conflict around the Prinzessinnengarten in the context of Berlin’s Liegenschaftspolitik? What are the claims and visions expressed by the urban actors involved and in what ways do they differ? Which means have been employed by the urban community garden to make their claims heard and from whom and why did they receive support? What are the specific “conditions” of success? Given the topicality of the urban conflict researched, the study provides a timely account of Berlin’s urban development and mirrors recent perspectives and reactions on the part of Berlin’s citizen.

The research of the case study will be based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. In order to identify the different interests and claims associated with the site by the various actors, the research is augmented by five-semi structured interviews with both official and non-official actors involved in the conflict and with individuals knowledgeable of urban community gardens in Germany and is further supplemented by notes from participatory observations at public events and political discourse analysis. Using the unique, and in current literature sole, opportunity to empirically analyse the results of the petition with regards to the spatial scope and meaning of the urban community garden, descriptive statistical analysis will be applied. The paper will be structured as follows: In order to frame the urban conflict to be researched conceptually, I will begin with a review of literature dealing with urban community gardens, dominant paradigms in planning and politics and their impact on urban public space, DIY urbanism and the creative city. Secondly, I will introduce my case study by tracing its development, describing its socio-cultural functions and relevant land tenure status. I will then sketch out the context of the announced sale by focusing primarily on Berlin’s Liegenschaftspolitik. In this context I will outline the claims and visions of development as expressed by the Prinzessinnengarten and its advocates. Afterwards, I will investigate the
tactics employed by the urban community garden and analyse the nature and role of the established networks and coalitions.

2 CONTEXTUALISING URBAN COMMUNITY GARDENS

2.1 THE DISTINCT NATURE OF GERMAN URBAN COMMUNITY GARDENS

Over the last ten years, urban community gardens have received a great deal of attention both in the public realm and among scholars. However, despite the numerous studies approaching them from different analytical angles, there is still no widely accepted common definition. Following Rosol (2012a: 124) community gardens are, compared to other urban gardening forms and institutionalised public green spaces, typically “run by volunteers and oriented towards public use” and can be defined according to their “collective and public character”. For the purpose of this paper, my arguments will be based on and informed by this definition.

Overwhelmingly, community gardens have received many acknowledgements and much praise among scholars due to their numerous benefits for communities (Firth et al. 2011, Baker 2004), their positive impact on the environment (Hudson 2000), their high integral component (Holland 2004) and their function in food security (Baker 2004, Haidle and Arndt 2007). Further, they attracted notice from urban planners for their potential in revitalising urban voids in shrinking areas and cities (Eißner and Heydenreich 2004) and their contribution to community urban development (Knigge 2009, Armstrong 2000). Despite the long list of studies in the international context, analyses of urban community gardens in Germany are still in the nascent stages. The few that exist focus primarily on their role in urban agriculture (Lohrberg 2001), understand them as potential green interim uses (Urban Catalyst 2007, Rosol 2005), or analyse their changing relation to the local state (Rosol 2010a, 2012b). While the term “community garden” is mostly associated with cities in North America, it was, until recently, rarely used in the German context and has only sparked wider interest in the past couple of years. However, in contrast to North American gardens, the German equivalent differs in some regards and is, for instance, less focused on food production and food supply due to a better social welfare system.

In the German context, it is often argued that the motives for urban community gardens derive not only from the interest in urban gardening per se but also from the desire to encourage
other non-commercial uses and imply direct or indirect “political claims” related to local politics and urban development or to global issues (Rosol 2010b). In this context, a few German scholars have made initial attempts to conceptually link community gardens with other alternative practices and projects in order to understand the shared motives and claims (Baier et al. 2013, Müller 2011). In their recent publication ‘City of Commonists: New Urban Spaces of Do-it yourself’, Baier et al. (2013) suggest that community gardens and other forms of do-it-yourself initiatives use the Post-Fordist city as a laboratory for approaching social, political and ecological issues in an experimental way and investigating possibilities and solutions for both local and global issues. They reflect the inspiration to re-imagine urban space and explore how these could be conceptualised and developed differently. In this context, Crawford (2012) highlights the innovative and explorative nature of such practices and suggests that “rather than reacting against capitalist imperatives, they respond to opportunities, as much as solving problems, they offer possibilities”. Moreover, the great number of people engaging in these gardens reflects their desire to take part in neighbourhood development and their interest in shaping the environment according to their own imaginations, which might be contradictory to the predefined spaces created by traditional urban planning (Müller 2012a,b). Simultaneously, urban community gardens seek to create new spaces of commons by appropriating and shaping urban spaces and challenge dominant notions of possession and ownership (Baier et al. 2013). This view complies with Harvey’s (2012: 73) detection of a growing “social practice of commoning” as a response to the progressive privatisation of public goods. “At the heart of the practice of commoning”, he writes, “lies the principle that the relation between the social group and that aspect of the environment being treated as a common shall be both collective and non-commodified – off limits to the logic of market exchange and market valuations”. Community gardens question the status of (public) land as commodity and shape urban spaces from a use value point of view. In order to situate community gardens in broader contexts I will provide a brief overview of relevant literature discussing contemporary urban dynamics in planning and politics and its impact on the urban realm in cities of the Global North.

2.2 DOMINANT PARADIGMS IN URBAN POLITICS AND PLANNING

Since the late 1970s, cities in North America and Western Europe have been exposed to substantial economic and socio-cultural transformations to which they responded with new approaches in urban politics and planning, which marked the beginning of the “subordination
of social to economic priorities” (Groth and Corjin 2005: 504). According to Harvey (1989) the changes in urban politics reflect a shift from “managerialism” to “entrepreneurialism” and imply a re-orientation of the local state from distribution and the provision of social services towards a more “entrepreneurial stance”. The latter combines the “commitment to the extension of markets and logics of competitiveness with a profound antipathy to all kinds of Keynesian and/or collectivist strategies” and is accompanied by an institutional shift from “government to “governance” (Peck and Tickell 2002: 381). This reorientation of urban policies has also caused a shift in “planning paradigms”, leading to a new notion of cities as “entrepreneurs and enterprises” in which public-private partnerships are mobilised to realise urban development objectives more efficiently (Hall and Hubbard 1998, cited in Rosol 2012b). It is often argued that the Post-Fordist city is more exposed to macro-pressures and influences than the Fordist city due to its greater responsibility to provide economic growth and stability in a context of inter-urban competition and the need to constantly find new marks of distinction. For this reason, according to Harvey (1989: 15), “urban governance has moved more rather than less into line with the naked requirements of capital accumulation” and cities have started to prioritise economic profits, prevalently at the expanse of welfare and collective consumption.

It is exactly this entrepreneurial market paradigm that Lefebvre (1996: 123-129) identifies as the genesis of the “crisis of the city” and criticises for being based on “exchanges and places of exchange; [which] emphasizes the quantity of economic exchanges and leaves aside quality, the essential difference between use value and exchange value”. In this context, Schmelzkopf (2002) notes that particularly social goods, which have use value and provide innumerable benefits to urban inhabitants, lack consideration under the dominating paradigm, as they cannot be compared along a monetary scale. He stresses the incommensurability of use and exchange values and highlights the difficulty of justifying and defending qualitative projects and initiatives within a neoliberal urban policy framework.

2.3 THE IMPACT ON “URBANITY” AND URBAN (PUBLIC) SPACE

The impact of this “re-conquest of the city by commodity and capital” (Swyngedouw 2003: 12) on urban (public) spaces has become a key focus of sociological and geographical research in the past two decades. Many scholars have been concerned with the processes through which various groups are excluded or restricted from accessing certain spaces (Iveson
2007, Herbert 2008) or have identified the “end of public spaces” (Mitchell 1995) due to its increasing commodification, homogenisation and surveillance (Hajer 1999). Following Häussermann and Siebel’s (1987) notion of “urbanity” which unfolds in the “confrontation with diversity, the un-expected, the non-planned and the resistant moment”, Groth and Corjin (2005: 505-522) argue that current approaches in urban planning fail to pay justice to the increasing socio-cultural complexity constituting contemporary cities and impact negatively on spaces where “multiple activities and encounters can co-exist”. Harvey (2012: 67) confirms this perspective by arguing that the “recent wave of privatizations, enclosures, spatial controls, policies, and surveillance” has a profound impact “upon the qualities of urban life in general, and in particular upon potentiality to build or inhibit new forms of social relations (new commons)”. At the same time, though, he identifies a “recent revival of emphasis upon the supposed loss of urban commonalities” which he interprets as an attempt of social groups to develop other strategies to support the commons, which are gradually diminished by neoliberal politics (ibid: 73). The essential argument made by Harvey refers to the increasing dissatisfaction among social groups with current dynamics of urban transformation and their desire to find and develop new spaces where a community can be formed.

According to Groth and Corjin (2005: 506) the “active repossession and symbolic reconstruction of everyday urban spatial structures” by informal actors\(^1\) is an emerging phenomenon in many cities in Western Europe and North America. In current literature, the appropriation of and claim over public space has been frequently framed as “right to the city” (Lefebvre 1996) and a number of studies on public space have examined the conflicts and struggles that revolve around “claim-making” (Iveson 2007, Mitchell 2003 cited in Koch and Latham 2012: 518). The following chapter will focus on studies that investigate the range of practices through which urban (public) spaces have been appropriated by urban inhabitants and which have tried to develop adequate conceptual frameworks to grasp their shared dynamics.

\(^1\) They define informal actors as non-officials coming from outside the “institutionalised domain of urban planning”.

3 THE PARADOX OF ALTERNATIVE URBAN INTERVENTIONS

3.1 EXPLORING THE “POSSIBLE CITY”

In recent years, the growing number and diversity of urban practices appropriating and reshaping urban (public) spaces in many cities has attracted scholarly attention. These micro-spatial practices vary in size and legality\(^2\) and can range from alternative living projects, community gardens, and DIY Street markets to skate or sculpture parks. This provoked Iveson (2013: 941) to pose the question whether there is “a larger picture emerging across these practices and projects” and what is the “nature of this bigger picture if it does exist”? So far, contemporary urbanists still struggle to grasp these practices conceptually and are uncertain about their commonalities and connections. The search for adequate concepts and languages to describe these practices is mirrored by the variety of terms that have been used, ranging from “temporary”, “second hand”, “insurgent”, “everyday”, “grassroot” to “do-it-yourself” (DIY) urbanism (Haydn and Temel 2006, Hou 2010, Crawford 2012, Iveson 2013, Ziehl et al. 2012).

Initial attempts to develop potential typologies in order to capture the shared principles and dynamics have been already made and provide a valuable account. Crawford (2012) suggests that many of the alternative DIY practices include one or more of the following principles: “defamiliarization” of the urban environment intends to unsettle our predefined perception of urban spaces by exploring alternative possibilities; “refamiliarization” refers to the process where previous unfamiliar practices and uses become more familiar through altering urban situations and spaces; “decommodification” implies the substitution of use value for exchange value and challenges the status of land as commodity; “alternative economies” includes practices of swapping, recycling, and information-sharing, and “new politics of collaboration” suggests that many collaborations don’t have pre-constituted roles and subjects but evolve in response to specific circumstances. Many of the addressed principles are applicable to urban community gardens in Germany, given their desire to encourage non-

\(^2\) From a legal point of view, DIY interventions exist along a wide spectrum from being permitted by private investors and cooperating with urban planning officials to being illegal. Pagano (2013: 35) locates DIY interventions in a progressive property frame, arguing that they bring the “needed flexibility to the related endeavours of building cities and balancing property rights”.
commodified uses, their motivation to explore new concepts for urban space and the number of alternative economies which they provide (Baier et al. 2013).

Alternative urban interventions are often established on derelict and uncommitted spaces and work in the “cracks between formal planning, speculative investment and local possibilities” (Tonkiss 2013: 313). Their aim is to re-imagine and re-make urban (public) spaces through experimental approaches, this corresponds to Lynch’s (1968, cited in Tonkiss ibid) notion of the “possible city” in which he suggests that a focus on un-used spaces can provide greater autonomy and creativity than over-planned environments. Moreover, DIY practices perform a dual function by uncovering a specific need and desire of urban inhabitants and simultaneously work towards filling that need. For Groth and Corjin (2005: 506), these practices demonstrate the significance of “socially constructed spaces” that are based on the “lived experience” and epitomise their “dissociation from modernist utilitarian approaches and the logics of planning”. However, while many interventions provide local services and compensate for a lack of public provision, they are simultaneously in danger of becoming co-opted by the state and integrated into policy agendas (Tonkiss 2013).

3.2 ALTERNATIVE URBAN PRACTICES AND THE CREATIVE CITY

Although planning and urban policies respond to alternative urban practices in several ways, and partly reject or preclude their existence, recent studies indicate that some of them have been increasingly incorporated into creative city strategies in order to stimulate economic and cultural development (Andres 2013, Colomb 2012, Bader and Scharenberg 2010, SenStadt 2013). Since Florida’s publication ‘The Rise of the Creative Class’ (2002), in which he asserts that creativity and culture are a beneficial location factor to stimulate economic growth in an era of inter-urban competition, many cities in Western Europe, North America and elsewhere have subscribed to the “creative city” agenda and follow Florida’s guidelines to establish and promote a particular “people climate” which is ideally open, tolerant and culturally diverse (Krätke 2010: 835). The latest trend in the interpretation and implementation of this concept is characterised by a “gradual process of enlistment of new forms of cultural and social expression” and is nourished on practices and projects like beach bars, sculpture parks and urban community gardens (Colomb 2012: 133). For a long time, these spaces were overlooked by local politicians and ignored in official marketing schemes due to their perceived irrelevance for place branding and inter-urban competition. Yet, their growing popularity has attracted the interest of public officials in many cities like Berlin, Brussels,
London or Helsinki and they have been gradually harnessed for economic and cultural development policies and used to unlock the potential of disused sites (Colomb 2012, Williams and Bishop 2012, Andres 2013). According to Tonkiss (2013: 318) this strategy is often employed by recessionary cities and part of their austerity agenda in order to “keep vacant sites warm while development capital is cool”.

Although public officials have celebrated Florida’s creative development agenda, it has received much critique among critical urban researchers for “repacking urban cultural artefacts as a competitive asset” and valuing them “not for their own sake but in terms of their (supposed) economic utility” (Peck 2005: 763-764). Although many of the appropriated spaces are positively acknowledged and promoted on the part of public officials, they are simultaneously perceived as only second-best options and are considered to be temporary (Williams and Bishop 2012). This ambivalence is also prevalent with regards to community gardens. Although they are widely praised for their social and environmental benefits by local politicians and planners, they are mostly granted with only “temporary status” until a “higher and better use” occurs and are not part of long-term planning processes. According to Lawson (2004: 167) there is clearly a “lack of recognition on the part of planners and officials … to consider citizens’ incremental interventions as valued permanent resources”. The idea of temporary use, says Ziehl (2012: 300), is “informed by a point of view rooted in real estate management that emphasizes the reduction of vacancy costs and the upgrading of real estate” but overlooks the numerous qualities of these spaces. This fundamental dilemma has often led to local conflicts around these spaces and generated opposition on the part of its initiators and users. In some instances, temporary users have successfully managed to achieve a consideration of their positive socio-economic functions and triggered a realignment of the planning objectives and processes (Groth and Corjin 2005). Novy and Colomb (2012: 1817) highlight that in particular the creative “segment of society” around which cities compete plays an increasing role in such conflicts and opposes the “growth-oriented entrepreneurial policy agendas… and the appropriation or outright destruction of culture and creativity that such agendas entail”.

3.3 COMMUNITY GARDENS, URBAN POLITICS AND LOCAL CONFLICTS

Given the paradox, that community gardens are perceived as “opportunistic and temporary” (Lawson 2004: 151) although they require much effort and time and constitute a sense of
belonging, it is surprising that studies focusing on contestations over land use are primarily limited to the case of New York City (Schmelzkopf 1995, Staeheli, Mitchell and Gibson 2002, Smith and Kurtz 2003, see Lebuhn 2008 for an exception on Los Angeles). Under the Giuliani Administration, many community gardens located on city-owned land were threatened in their existence due to the announced plans to develop the garden plots for potential housing and became involved in political contestations around land use and planning. For Schmelzkopf (2002) and Staeheli, Mitchell and Gibson (2002) the conflict was essentially a contest over the right to space and the ‘right to the city’ (Lefebvre 1996) and implied competing claims and values between city authorities and community gardeners. In this context, Smith and Kurtz (2003) pay particular attention to the means that have been applied by garden advocates to prevent the sales. Their analysis demonstrates the significance of local and citywide garden coalitions that were established in the course of the struggle and highlights the importance of raising the scope of the conflict beyond the locality in order to successfully challenge neoliberal policies (ibid: 193). Lawson (2004) suggests that political conflicts over space and land use can be found throughout history and derive from the “ambivalent relationship” between planning policies and community gardens, in which community gardens remain vulnerable due to their interim status.

In the German context, studies focusing on political contestations over space related to urban community gardens are very limited. Though, in her brief exploration of a local conflict over a children’s farm³ in Berlin, Rosol (2010b) refers to an important aspect regarding the political motivation for appropriating “free” spaces, which provides a good connecting point for my analysis. She suggests that the core motivation of many community gardeners in Germany derives not exclusively from gardening per se but is a “political implication of the free space concept” which entails the possibility to creatively develop and use free spaces in the city (ibid: 208). This concept touches upon many of the subjects I have introduced in my theoretical part and confirms the necessity of expanding the conceptual lens beyond the subject of urban community gardens when analysing the conflict over the Prinzessinnengarten in Berlin.

³ The children’s farm (Kinderbauernhof) in Berlin Kreuzberg combines urban gardening with keeping animals.
In order to do justice to the complexity of the land use conflict around the Prinzessinnengarten, a combination of four different methodological approaches has been applied including semi-structured interviews, political discourse analysis, participatory observation and descriptive statistical analysis.

For an in-depth understanding of the controversy, five semi-structured interviews were conducted of which three were case-related and the other two related to urban community gardens in Germany. The three case-related interviews were conducted with the initiator of the Prinzessinnengarten, the mayor of the local borough Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg and one representative of the Initiative StadtNeudenken, which is a local initiative advocating for a realignment of Berlin’s Liegenschaftspolitik. The interviewees were chosen for two reasons: Firstly, they were identified as key actors in the local conflict and/ or political discourse and secondly the combination of institutionalised and non-institutionalised actors provided the possibility to capture different perspectives. In particular, the interview with the mayor of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg offered a unique opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge about political structures and decision-making processes. Unfortunately, it was not possible to interview representatives from the Senate Department of Finance or the Property Fund as no person willing to be interviewed could be found. The interviews varied in length between 1-2.5 hours and primarily contained questions about Berlin’s Liegenschaftspolitik, the context and conflict around the Prinzessinnengarten and the means that were employed for its preservation. Due to the lack of studies focusing on urban community gardens in Germany, semi-structured interviews were conducted with two German academics knowledgeable in this field (Appendix A1).

As planning projects and public policies are often accompanied by political discourses through which different participants interact and exercise power, a political discourse analysis provides an adequate tool to elucidate contrasting claims and visions of the urban actors involved. Considering that political discourses imply a strong normative and moral component and are typically arranged around a particular problem which is to be solved, an analysis will help to identify the different values that exist among the actors and indicate the central questions and major issues around which the controversy revolves (Patterson and Monroe 1988, Bruner 1996). The analysis is thereby based on several sources, including newspapers articles, policy documents, press releases, documentations of public talks as well
as documents provided by the Initiative StadtNeudenken (ISN) and the Prinzessinnengarten.

Moreover, the political discourse analysis is supplemented with notes from my participatory observation at two public events. The first event I attended was the 5th Round Table initiated by the ISN and was joined by members of the city parliament, representatives from the Senate Departments for Finance as well as Urban Development and Environment and the Liegenschaftsfond, in order to discuss criteria and options for a realigned Liegenschaftspolitik. Furthermore, I participated in a workshop organised by the Heinrich Böll Foundation. The workshop with the title “Do it yourself City” dealt with possibilities and constraints of appropriating urban spaces, taking part in urban development and initiating “do-it yourself” projects (Heinrich Böll Stiftung 2013). In contrast to the first event, this workshop was approached from the user point of view and presented best-practice grassroots initiatives. It was significant that the Prinzessinnengarten was introduced as one of the best-practice examples for appropriating and reshaping public urban spaces and serves to demonstrate the timeliness of my topic.

Existing literature on urban community gardens is predominantly based on qualitative research and highlights the motives of people for green spaces, food production or spaces for community engagement. However, the successful petition of the Prinzessinnengarten and the available data provide the unique opportunity to empirically detect the meaning attached to the garden and to generate new insights regarding its spatial scope. By applying descriptive statistics, I attempt to reveal who supported the garden, in terms of spatial distribution in the city, and why. Within two months time, a total of 30,000 people from Berlin and elsewhere signed the Prinzessinnengarten’s petition either online or on postcards. Out of the 30,000 people about 6000 submitted open-ended comments in which they listed reasons for the garden’s protection. For the purpose of this research, only comments from Berlin residents were considered, resulting in a total of 3100 online comments. The exact number of handwritten comments from Berlin residents is not precisely known due to the way they have been preserved but comprise, according to estimations, about 450 comments. In order to reduce the large amount of test material to a “workable” number it was decided to generate a random sample. From the 3100 online comments, every eighth one was selected and the number was

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4 The Heinrich Böll Foundation is closely affiliated with the German Green Party and promotes, inter alia, sustainability, social equity regardless of gender, religion or ethnicity and supports democracy.
5 About 70% of the signatures have been collected online while the rest was collected through postcards, which were provided in the garden and were a means to reach the local population.
6 From these 6000 comments 5500 were received online and 500 were collected via postcards.
reduced to 400. To ensure representativeness of the spatial distribution, the postcodes specified by people were sorted in ascending order to keep the distribution of them as equal as possible. The hand-written comments (on postcards) were stored in several boxes out of which 200 were randomly selected, resulting in a final sample of 600 comments. For the spatial analysis, the provided postcodes have been allocated to the correlating districts and boroughs in Berlin and a frequency distribution has been made to reveal how much support derived from which area in the city. In order to analyse the meaning attached to the garden, a category system, which serves as a central tool for the analysis, has been developed to ensure traceability and intersubjectivity. For the development of the category system an inductive approach has been applied allowing a nuanced, material-based analysis that considers the text parts in an appropriate form (Früh 2007). In order to allow comments including more than one category to be considered appropriately, all text parts containing information/reasons for the preservation of the garden are coded on the level of the semantic unit and the word level. Furthermore, a codebook has been developed that describes the conceptual meaning of categories and provides examples (Appendix A2). To ensure reliability of the coding process, three coders, including myself, were used. The results showed great accordance and indicated a high level of quality of the category system.

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7 Every eighth one was selected as it was aspired to reach a sample of 600 comments that would reflect 10% of the total number of open-ended comments.
8 The number of comments on postcards is thus overrepresented compared to the population. This is due to two reasons: Firstly, people who submitted postcards in the garden might be more likely to come from the neighbourhood, which can be characterised as being socio-economically deprived with a large amount of people having a migration background; and secondly, the people from the neighbourhood might be concerned with different issues and have a different view on the garden than those who signed online.
9 Though every category can be allocated only once to a comment.
10 A semantic unit refers to a subject-related text passage.
5 CASE STUDY AND BACKGROUND OF THE CONFLICT

5.1 COMMUNITY GARDENS IN BERLIN AND THE CASE OF THE PRINZESSINNENGARTEN

Berlin has a long tradition of private allotment gardens and grassroots initiatives designing green spaces in the city, yet the phenomenon of community gardening as gardens that are run by volunteers, are publicly accessible, and are typically designed on vacant and disused spaces, emerged only about a decade ago. According to Rosol (2012b) this recent rise derives from the changing governing context and the growing acceptance of collectively run urban green spaces as a “neoliberal strategy” in which previously municipal services are outsourced to (unpaid) private actors. For this reason, Rosol (2012a) suggests that not only the political context but also the political orientation of such gardens has changed, away from urban social movements, prominent in the 1980s, towards a new form of voluntarism compensating for the withdrawal of the local state. Although Berlin is usually perceived as a relatively green city, the quality and quantity of green spaces varies greatly between the districts, and particularly those having a high degree of dense Wilhelminian style buildings suffer from a lack or overuse of green spaces (Rosol 2004). At the same time, Berlin’s urban landscape is – due to political and historical reasons – still sprinkled with vacant and disused sites, which offer the potential for new open green spaces and other alternative urban practices (Huysen 2003).

In 2009, the non-profit association Normadisch Grün launched the Prinzessinnengarten as one of Berlin’s recent urban community gardens. Established on 6000m² former wasteland at the corner of Moritzplatz in Berlin Kreuzberg, the community garden made use of a remaining disused site in Berlin’s inner city area, which was neglected by the construction and development boom during the early 1990s. Historically, the site was once home to the large Wertheim department store, which was destroyed during World War II and is located in the immediate vicinity of the former Berlin wall. Between the 1950s and the 1970s, the site served several in-between uses but was later closed to the public.

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11 Colomb (2012: 133) identifies five major reasons that explain the vast number of urban voids in Berlin: the city’s former division by the wall, extensive damage during WW2, the destruction of buildings by political regimes, rapid deindustrialisation and the slow resolution of contestations over land and property post-1989.

12 The construction boom in post-unification Berlin was primarily focused on central areas around Berlin-Mitte and Potsdamer Platz (Groth and Corijn 2005, Colomb 2012).
Due to this inaccessibility of the area, members of the Social Democratic Party assembled in 1984 and planted two lime trees as a token gesture claiming the opening of the area for public use (Figure 2). Back then, nobody would have thought that the symbolic planting of two trees would eventually set the cornerstone for a future community garden at the same plot of land. Twenty-five years later though, the two lime trees still exist and flourish in the middle of an urban garden surrounded by vegetables, herbs and bees (Figure 3).
After half a century of vacancy the community garden brought new life to the centrally located site at Moritzplatz, dominated by its busy roundabout and high volume of traffic, and used it as a laboratory to explore new concepts for urban (public) space (Figure 4). The community garden is based on voluntary work with up to “30,000 hours per season” and is publicly accessible attracting about 50,000 visitors annually (Prinzessinnengärten 2012a). Inspired by the agricultura urbana in Cuba, the Prinzessinnengarten follows the primary objective of making the garden a place of learning and hands-on experience. Accordingly, vegetables and herbs are grown and harnessed in situ, giving food production a more prominent role than is usually the case in Berlin’s community gardens [4]. Alongside the focus on gardening, the Prinzessinnengarten runs several local and citywide educational programs, partly in cooperation with other socio-cultural institutions. This integrative concept which covers topics from education, food sovereignty, ecology, recycling and urban development is a distinct feature of the Prinzessinnengarten and sits within a “broader, indeed international movement” that is concerned with “neighbourhood activism, reduction of non-ecological transportation, means for those in declining neighbourhoods to help themselves (and) education for sustainable development” (Tonkiss 2013: 316) (Figure 5-8).

Fig. 5 (left top): Public library at Prinzessinnengarten, Source: Phil Dera, 2013.
Fig. 6 (right top): Bicycle repair shop at Prinzessinnengarten, Source: Matthew Gandy, 2013.
Fig. 7 (left bottom): Urban Gardening at Prinzessinnengarten, Source: Author’s photo, 2013.
Fig. 8 (right bottom): Meeting place at Prinzessinnengarten, Source: Phil Dera, 2013.
The *Prinzessinnengarten* rents the plot of land from the *Liegenschaftsfond* (Property Fund), which is a private company owned by the *Land Berlin* in charge of privatising city-owned land and properties. In 2009, when the community garden applied for the plot of land at Moritzplatz, the site was already part of the portfolio of the *Liegenschaftsfond* and designated to be sold in the near future. For this reason, the community garden received only temporary leases in the form of one to two-year contracts and was designed as a “mobile garden”, where vegetables and herbs are grown on packing crates and cartons, providing it with a high degree of mobility and place autonomy. The lot at Moritzplatz was not the garden’s preferred location, yet being dependent on the support of local authorities or property owners, as is typical for temporary uses, the urban garden only had a limited range of choices (Growth and Corjin 2005). Although several private developers acknowledged the potential of the proposed idea for its “interesting concept that could actually work” they refused a collaboration, given the simple reason that a “well-functioning, established community garden in Berlin-Kreuzberg is a threat for an investor” [2]. In retrospect, the developers proved correct as the *Prinzessinnengarten* gained popularity within a short period of time and received immeasurable support from individuals from Berlin and elsewhere willing to engage in the garden. For Clausen, the tremendous support is an indicator for the “zeitgeist of the space” and the desire of people to shape their environment according to their own needs and imaginations [2].

However, the *Prinzessinnengarten* did not only catch the interest of local residents but received also acknowledgements and praise on the part of the media and local politicians. Across local and national newspapers, from conservative to left-wing, the garden was positively reviewed and referred to as “showcase of Germany’s urban-gardening movement” (Haeming 2011), that has transformed “a former wasteland into a green urban biotope with social and cultural value” (Tietz 2010) and can be regarded as a “laboratory for the sustainable city of tomorrow” (Schoon 2011). According to the Property Fund (2011: 21) the *Prinzessinnengarten* belongs to those projects “that make up Berlin in its entity and without which Berlin would be much poorer” and local politicians, such as the Senator for Urban Development and Environment, identify it as a “pilot function” for the entire city (Müller 2012). Moreover, the *Prinzessinnengarten* was promoted in official city marketing and tourism websites and celebrated as a symbol for “culture and creativity” (n/a n/d). Focusing on creative “do-it-yourself” projects and temporary uses in Berlin, the Senate Department for Urban Development and Environment selected the *Prinzessinnengarten* as a best practice
example for “self-made” urbanism and regards it as a “symbol for a future-oriented land use policy” (SenStadt 2013).

Despite the numerous positive appraisals of the project’s contributions on the part of public officials, the Liegenschaftsfond was commissioned to sell the plot of land on behalf of the Berlin Senate in the summer of 2012. This imminent threat posed by the announced sale intensified political contestations around land use and planning and prompted the Prinzessinnengarten to lobby for an extended lease. Although the community garden was initially set up as intermediate use by the official site, this situation exemplifies the “inherently contradictory and conflicting” idea of temporary uses as identified by Colomb (2012: 133). After investing a significant amount of time and work in the garden and becoming embedded in the local neighbourhood, hopes and desires grew for a more permanent use. Though, as with many other temporary uses, the Prinzessinnengarten became the victim of its own success by rising land value and “investor’s interests in the previously neglected site” and demonstrated its status as only “second-best option … in the absence of other development options” (ibid: 133-141). Related to this contradiction, Schmelzkopf (2002: 327) notes that “once the crisis is over and community garden plots increase in market-rate value, there has been a tendency for gardens to be re-evaluated as impractical and inefficient uses of land. Support is withdrawn, and the land allocated for other more lucrative economic uses”. The situation of the Prinzessinnengarten closely follows this trend, and the evolving land use conflict offers a unique lens with which to view contemporary dynamics in urban development and politics in Berlin. In order to frame the land use conflict researched, the background of Berlin’s Liegenschaftspolitik will be discussed and political discourses in this regard will be analysed.

5.2 BERLIN’S LIEGENSCHAFTSPOLITIK AND CREATIVE CITY STRATEGIES

Berlin’s post-1989 restructuring process saw a short period of economic growth and intensive urban development, leading some to predict the beginning of the city’s “second Gründerzeit” (Molnar 2010). During the early 1990s, hopes were high that Berlin would transform into an economic powerhouse, able to catch up and compete with global cities, such as London and New York and become a “model of the future metropolis” (Molnar ibid: 282).

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13 The term refers to the nineteenth century when Berlin experienced a phase of economic prosperity and “its foundations as a modern metropolis were laid“ (Molnar 2010: 281).
Yet, in the light of enduring low growth rates and high unemployment rates compared to other federal states since the mid-1990s, the brief moment of “economic and real estate euphoria” faded. Despite restoring the city as Germany’s capital, a large wave of company relocation failed to appear and the reality of Berlin’s urban and economic development was not able to measure up to the promised expectations. At the turn of the millennium, the government of the Land Berlin\textsuperscript{14} suffered a major fiscal crisis and nearly faced bankruptcy in 2001 (Colomb 2012). In order to consolidate the city’s financial situation, the Berlin government imposed rigorous “cuts in social expenditures and public services” (Krätke 2004) and established the Liegenschaftsfond (Property Fund) to generate revenues through sales of city-owned land and properties. Austerity budgeting in the public sector and the progressive privatisation and dispossession of public goods has been identified as a common strategy in urban politics of cities “in crisis” (Tonkiss 2013, Peck 2012).

In the period between 2004-2012 the Liegenschaftsfond sold about 400 to 500 public assets annually and yielded about € 2.2 billion in revenue (Thiel 2012). The portfolio of the company consists primarily of land and properties previously possessed by the city’s boroughs but which became designated for privatisation in cases which lacked clear identification of utilisation.\textsuperscript{15} For Thiel (ibid: 4) the gradual dispossession of land and properties that were once held or used in public resembles “land grabbing” practices and decreases the possibility to use these sites for social or cultural purposes. Although the Property Fund was able to generate a substantial amount of revenue in the past decade, the performance of the sales varied greatly. Due to Berlin’s slowly growing economy until 2006 and its relatively low land and property prices, many city-owned assets were “literally dumped and sold far below the actual market value”. However, this changed in the course of the global financial crisis in 2007/2008 when the demand increased significantly, leading to sales nearly four times above the market value [1].

The establishment of the Property Fund by the beginning of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century was accompanied by a new official city marketing approach, incorporating new images and formerly neglected sites and uses, such as alternative living projects, beach bars, sculpture parks or community gardens (Colomb 2012). According to Colomb (ibid: 138) the mobilisation and integration of

\textsuperscript{14} Berlin is a city-state in the German federal system.

\textsuperscript{15} Berlin’s boroughs have a one-off right to hold public land and properties for five years to react to possible demographic changes and to guarantee services for the public, though after that period they have to be passed over to the Property Fund (Schulz 2013).
creative, alternative projects and (temporary) uses into urban politics and official city branding schemes was a reaction to the increasing popularity of these spaces and their perceived potential to serve as a location factor and to attract tourists. Given Berlin’s low growth rates, the demand for speculative development on city-owned vacant and disused spaces was limited and provided a fertile ground for urban experimentation and alternative urban practices (Tonkiss 2013). Yet, in the context of Berlin’s recent real estate boom and the enduring privatisation practices pursued on the part of the Liegenschaftsfond that have significantly reduced the number of public assets in recent years, the objectives of the public policy became a topic of intense political debate.

5.3 POLITICAL DISCOURSES: CONTRASTING INTERESTS BETWEEN PLANNING AND POLITICS

The political discourses around Berlin’s Liegenschaftspolitik are very congested and reveal polarising interests and values among political decision-makers. Disparate positions exist most notably between the Senate Department for Finance (SenFin), which is predominantly interested in budgetary consolidation and the Senate Department for Urban Development (SenStadt), which suggests a realignment of the policy in favour of urban development objectives. The different interests of the policy sectors and the dominant principles upon which the Liegenschaftspolitik acts is fundamentally rooted in the institutional framework and cannot be understood without clarifying the scope of duty of both policy sectors and the weight they hold in political decision making.

The city’s finance department holds responsibility for taxes, budget, administration management, and public assets and is thus in charge of managing public land and properties. The Property Fund is subordinated to the finance department and operates according to its defined guidelines. Although the integrated aim of the Liegenschaftsfond to combine urban development, economic and housing objectives is often emphasised, the director acknowledges that these targets compete in reality - mostly at the expanse of urban development objectives (SenStadt 2009: 18). For Thiel (2012) the Liegenschaftspolitik is predominantly based on fiscal objectives and sells city-owned land and properties almost solely to the highest bidder. This is not surprising given that the city’s finance department is the decision-making authority determining the direction which public policy takes and is
clearly in favour of a “primarily economically driven” Liegenschaftspolitik in order to “tackle Berlin’s budget deficit” (Nußbaum 2012).

The SenStadt, in contrast, covers a range of areas of accountability, such as housing, urban development and planning, nature and public green spaces and infrastructure. According to SenStadt the extensive privatisation over the past decade has significantly reduced the quantity and quality of city-owned real estate and gradually limits the possibility to govern and shape the prospective development of the city. Under the title ‘Does everything need to go? The future of Berlin’s Liegenschaftspolitik’ the planning department introduced an initial discussion about Berlin’s public policy and emphasised the consideration of urban development and planning objectives to ensure long-term revenues for the city (SenStadt 2009: 4). According to the Senator of Urban Development, quality of life in neighbourhoods is closely related to the number of social and cultural projects and “city-owned land and properties need to be given to such initiatives” – if required under market value (Fahrun 2012). In principle, the planning department claims that it is moving towards a reorientation of public policy away from privatisation and towards proactive development.

In response to the gradually decreasing number of public assets and the evolving heated debates, the city parliament requested a draft for a new Liegenschaftspolitik which would consider “housing, labour, social and environmental objectives” by the beginning of 2012 (Zawatka-Gerlach 2012, Abgeordnetenhaus Berlin 2010). In September, the Berlin Senate approved a so-called “transparent Liegenschaftspolitik” which suggests combining fiscal objectives with “housing, cultural and wider urban development goals”, subject to the condition that they generate some sort of “city revenue” (SenFin 2012, 2013). It was about the same time when the new “transparent Liegenschaftspolitik” was introduced that the plan to sell the site of the Prinzessinnengarten to the highest bidder was publicly announced – in line with prior practices and in contrast to the suggested new policy. However, given the degree of popularity of the community garden combined with the great number of people who are engaged in it, the announced sale triggered a highly visible struggle and the Liegenschaftspolitik attracted notice like never before. In the following, the different claims and values that have been expressed by the actors will be focused on and the issues around which the struggle revolves will be investigated.
“The fundamental question is how we want to deal with public land in the future and how we can allow and guarantee projects which have other qualities and values than purely monetary ones… This monetary thought is a fallacy, as if you can find an equivalent for everything and base decisions on clear quantifications” [2].

After the plan was announced to sell the site at Moritzplatz to potential investors from the creative economy, the Property Fund and the city’s finance department contended that the sale of the site would be required due to the city’s poor fiscal situation and would help to consolidate Berlin’s financial situation. Given the centrality of the site in one of Berlin’s upcoming inner-city neighbourhoods, the revenue generated through the sale would amount to approximately € 6 Million. From a productivist perspective, the city’s finance department argued, that under current circumstances the city “can not afford” to sell city-owned land and properties to someone other than the highest bidder and has to prioritise economic profits (Bensiek 2012). The Prinzessinnengarten, in contrast, challenged this view, arguing that an urban landscape that is entirely privatised is a near-sighted approach with detrimental effects on the urban realm and the city’s prospective development. It was stressed that the garden provides numerous social, cultural and environmental benefits and services to the neighbourhood and serves as a stimulus for sustainable, neighbourhood-oriented urban development (Prinzessinnengärten 2012). For the Prinzessinnengarten, the controversy implicated the fundamental question of how these kinds of projects should be valued and how they can be preserved. While for Nußbaum, Berlin’s Finance Senator, the price alone is crucial and the Liegenschaftspolitik is accordingly guided by the “immanent logic of money and exchange value” (Lefebvre 1996: 131), it is difficult to calculate or quantify the value of a benefit and to attribute a certain monetary value to an urban community garden. For Schmelzkopf (2002: 331) social goods such as the Prinzessinnengarten have “use value but no exchange value, intrinsic value but no instrumental value” and cannot be “measured by ‘price alone’”. He refers to the problem of “incommensurability”, a term that was first introduced by Kuhn (1970, cited in Schmeltzkopf 2002) to point out “incomparable paradigms” and later enhanced by theorists such as Sunstein (1994). The notion that the
Prinzessinnengarten’s benefits and services are incomparable with the profits that would be potentially generated was an essential argument made by garden advocates.

Given the fact that Berlin’s Liegenschaftspolitik is based on the analysis of costs and benefits in order to achieve maximum utility, the Prinzessinnengarten claimed that adequate instruments and criteria would have to be developed to overcome the problem of incomparability and to allow a more balanced approached [2]. In this context, it was suggested to introduce a sectoral concept integrating different policy areas for the development and use of land that would allow public policy “to turn away from the pure selling-off and privatisation strategy and stimulate integrative urban development” [3]. According to Thiel (2012) the city has to provide the opportunity for its citizens to shape urban public spaces by taking responsibility for a community-oriented and sustainable handling of Berlin’s common land. He claims (ibid: 1) that democratic (planning-)processes, practices and instruments are needed that consider the ideas and needs of the citizens and allow them to take part in shaping their environment. This view was also shared by the national newspaper - Die Süddeutsche Zeitung – which demands political instruments for a more balanced approach.

“When selling city-owned sites, the highest bid rules – according to law. Who is able to pay the most wins the bid. What might sound appropriate given Berlin’s fiscal situation is fatal. The putative high revenues are generated at the expense of social, societal and cultural-political aspects, not to mention sustainable urban development…The Senate has to develop new instruments that consider such aspects” (Weißmüller 2012)

Yet, Berlin’s Liegenschaftspolitik and the local conflict around the Prinzessinnengarten did not only imply questions of values but it also triggered opposition on the part of cultural producers and the creative milieu who criticise Berlin’s entrepreneurial policy agenda and the notion of “culture as a label”. Considering Novy and Colomb’s (2012) findings about the increasing role of artists, cultural producers and the “creative class” in urban protests, a closer look on their role and claims in the local conflict around the community garden appears fruitful.
6.2 (SUB-)CULTURE AND CREATIVITY IS MORE THAN A LABEL

In the summer of 2011, the Initiative StadtNeudenken (ISN) – a citywide operating initiative consisting of architects, planners academics, cultural producers and artists – was established. It is a conglomeration of individuals who are, according to Florida (2002), part of the “creative class” and who came together to oppose the Property Fund’s one-dimensional privatisation policy. Being concerned about the impact of the fiscally oriented practices on culture, creativity and the city’s development in general, they intended to encourage a reorientation of the Liegenschaftspolitik by stimulating a qualified public debate and by providing policy input (ISN n/d). In order to clarify their claims and criticism, the initiative published a position paper, which was signed by 800 individuals and organisations. Therein they demanded a moratorium on the privatisation of city-owned land and properties and a realignment of the public policy that would contribute to and enhance Berlin’s cultural and social diversity (ISN 2011).

The establishment of the initiative and its increasing popularity since 2011 indicate a rising disaffection among the “creative class” with the city’s policy and planning agendas and the appropriation of culture and creativity as economic stimulus. What is noteworthy, however, is the fact that, in contrast to Novy and Colomb’s (2012) findings where the “creative class” engaged in protests and took a more resistant stance, the ISN has a deliberately pro-active and transformative position and is interested in another type of public debate. In this context they initiated in collaboration with representatives of the city parliament regular Round Tables in order to discuss current privatisation cases and to develop implementable criteria for a reorientation of the public policy. Yet, at the time when the endeavours on the part of the initiative seemed to bear first fruits and a realigned public policy was suggested, the conflict around the Prinzessinnengarten evolved and it was anticipated that it would indicate whether the policy was wholehearted. Given that the ISN and the community garden share common grounds in terms of visions and interests, they developed a symbiotic coalition in the course of the struggle and formulated similar claims and criticisms. Following Harvey’s (2002) argument that the appropriation and commodification of local culture for urban and economic development will prove to be disadvantageous and lead to a homogenisation among cities, the

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16 For the Initiative StadtNeudenken, the conflict around the Prinzessinnengarten offered a channel to reach the general public and to create awareness with regards to the public policy. The community garden, on the other hand, received valuable information and support on the part of the Initiative StadtNeudenken (further elaboration follows in chapter 7.1).
ISN suggests that Berlin can only keep its “worldwide attractiveness” when it preserves its “creative potential” (ISN 2011).

“Berlin has a unique atmosphere because of its alternative projects and the great number of creative’s and artists in the city. But, if the city proceeds selling public assets only to the highest bidder without any interest in actively shaping the urban landscape, then creative’s will leave and Berlin become replaceable” [1].

The decreasing distinctiveness and dwindling “monopoly advantage” is something that has been widely observed and discussed by critical geographers examining place-branding schemes in cities all over the world (Kearns and Philo: 1993, cited in Novy and Colomb 2012). Berlin is no exceptional case in this regard. The city’s extensive promotion of culture and creativity in official marketing strategies in order to upgrade Berlin’s symbolic value over the past ten years has simultaneously undermined the “everyday conditions necessary to sustain the creative process itself” (Bader and Scharenberg 2010: 80). In this context, both the Prinzessinnengarten and the ISN claim that “(sub-)culture and creativity need to be more than only a label” [1] and require protection through adequate policy instruments. The essence of this claim, I argue, implies a critique of Florida’s concept that perceives and treats culture and creativity only as competitive asset and overlooks the essential nature of many projects (Peck 2005). The Prinzessinnengarten became part of this discourse, due to the fact that it has been extensively promoted on official tourism websites and public talks as “Berlin-typical”, though the crucial support failed to appear in the case of quantifiable economic revenues.

“The planning department has always positively referred to us and promoted us on tourism websites and public talks, so, I think, it is also their responsibility to secure a prospect for the community garden...Sadly, there are only mechanisms to promote us but none to have a conversation with us when the chips are down” [2].

In this context, the concept and category of temporary uses was also addressed due to the inherent problem that the quality of projects is already devalued on the grounds of being only “temporary”, regardless of their benefits, contributions and meaning to the neighbourhood or city (Tonkiss 2013). According to Clausen, “classical temporary uses don’t pose any societal
questions”. The *Prinzessinnengarten*, in contrast, addresses many societal questions such as sustainability or mobility and is embedded in the neighbourhood. For this reason, the notion of “pioneer use” is discussed, which leaves the temporal dimension aside, and provides room to consider the qualities of projects [2]. For Baumann, the “*Prinzessinnengarten* exemplifies how much people love the street and free spaces and how much they need spaces of encounter and everyday life” which do not deserve the status temporary but should be valued for what they are and not used as “gap-filler” [1]. This discussion exemplifies the inherent contradictions associated with the notion of temporary uses and its inadequacy for many socio-cultural projects, which seek to embed in the neighbourhood and only unfold their full potential over time.

The former analysis demonstrates that the controversy over the *Prinzessinnengarten* is not only a local conflict over land use but is contextualised in broader issues of urban planning and politics in Berlin. The situation of the community garden illustrates the direction which public policy currently takes and where privatisation appears as the dominant strategy. The political discourses reveal conflicting visions and claims between the actors and revolve around issues of value, the protection of sub-culture, creativity and alternative spaces as well as questions about a more holistic approach towards the handling of public land and properties and the city’s development in general. Against the backdrop of the government’s clear privatisation strategy, the question occurs: how was the community garden able to influence urban planning policies and achieve consideration for its use value? In the following, I will focus on the means that have been employed by the *Prinzessinnengarten* in order to prevent the privatisation of the site at Moritzplatz.
7 DEFENDING THE PRINZESSINNENGARTEN

In order to conceptualise the efforts of the Prinzessinnengarten to save the plot of land, a combination of Cox’s (1998) concept of “spaces of dependence” and “spaces of engagement” as well as de Certeau’s (1984) notion of strategies versus tactics provides a fruitful analytical lens in this regard. With the aim of bringing fresh ideas to the spatiality of politics, Cox’s (1998: 5) approach derives from a social constructivist standpoint and pays particular attention to the role and nature of networks as a means to realise and advocate for local interests threatened through “changing economic geographies at more global scales”. He insists on the distinction between content and form in the politics of spaces and formulates the idea of “spaces of dependence” and “spaces of engagement”. For Cox (ibid: 2-3) “spaces of dependence” comply with local interests and “more-or-less localized social relations” which are interlinked with broader fields of events and forces. The notion of “spaces of engagement”, in contrast, can be understood as socially constructed space through which local interests are defended by constituting “networks of associations”. Instead of thinking only in local, regional and national terms, Cox (ibid: 2) suggests to conceptualise politics of space through networks that link actors. The construction of so-called “networks of associations” is a means to achieve control over a geographic area by incorporating “other centers of social power” such as state agencies, the press and those “who can exercise some indirect influence through their command of resources critical to them” or even have decision-making capacities (ibid: 7). The construction of networks defines the spatial form of politics of scale and often entails “jumping scales” from broader to smaller but more likely from smaller to broader scales than the space of dependence. In other words, agents tend to expand the struggle beyond the locality and seek to construct social networks stretching beyond the space of dependence (Smith and Kurtz 2003). Following Cox’ (1998) notion of local interests, the Prinzessinnengarten can be regarded as a “space of dependence” given the vast amount of time that has been spent to establish the garden, the numerous hours of voluntary work invested in maintaining and developing the space and the social relationships that have been built over time.

The idea of establishing “spaces of dependence” in order to defend a local interest, I argue, is closely related to what de Certeau regards as “tactics”. In his work ‘The Practices of Everyday Life’ (1984), he proposes the differentiation between “tactics” of the weaker actors and “strategies” of the powerful in order to describe how power relations are played out in the urban realm between these two. Strategies command a place of their own while tactics, de
Certeau suggests, do not have a place and depend on time to overcome the limits imposed by the powerful. For this reason, tactics are characterised by a degree of uncertainty and indeterminacy and have to “constantly manipulate events in order to turn them into ‘opportunities’” (ibid: xix). In contemporary planning literature on temporary urban spaces, de Certeau’s differentiation between tactics and strategies has been applied in order to conceptualise temporary uses. With regard to planning, strategy is interpreted as an approach that emerges from the “planning desk” and is dictated by those in the position of power to “force its opponents to accept its conditions and to ignore limitations imposed by circumstances”. Tactics, in contrast, refers to the weaker party - in this case the temporary users – which has to “try to exploit relationships to its advantage” and collaborate with the media and visitors (Haydn and Temel 2006). For Artl (2006: 42) the “urban-planning equivalent of tactics” is temporary use.

Considering the Prinzessinnengarten’s status as interim use and its dependence on state agencies defining the duration of temporality and its prospect, the community garden can be regarded as the weaker part in the power relationship. Given the fact that the project was not able to successfully compete in a highest bidding process, the Prinzessinnengarten had to construct “spaces of engagement” and to pique the interest of the media and the general public in order to circumvent the Property Fund’s privatisation plans. In the following, I will investigate the Prinzessinnengarten’s construction of “networks of associations” and analyse the tactics that have been applied in the course of the struggle to strengthen its position.

7.1 NETWORKS OF ASSOCIATIONS

Cox (1998: 3-4) argues that if actors experience a problematic situation in their space of dependence they tend to construct a network of associations to enforce their local interest. Yet, it is not only a matter of establishing any kind of network, but one that incorporates the “right” people, who are – due to their “command of resources”, such as knowledge or power – able to influence decision making processes. In contrast to other community gardens, which embody a “scale-related problem” owing to their isolated nature and lack of interaction with other gardens (Smith and Kurtz 2003: 201), the Prinzessinnengarten was always based on a broad and integrated concept that allowed a well-established, dispersed network. Since its establishment in 2009, the community garden has worked together with numerous social and
cultural institutions from all over the city and is strongly rooted in the neighbourhood due to its operation of multiple educational projects.

“From the beginning, we served both the gardening aspect and a communication aspect. The degree of public attention and connectivity, which we established through collaboration with theatres and so on, is something that most gardens don’t have. We have always addressed other issues than typical for urban gardens. We have found another language and other images for what we do and what we contribute. I think this combination is important, but the gardening aspect needs to be there” [2].

In the course of the struggle, the Prinzessinnengarten was able to revert to already existing networks and support. Yet, it was the garden’s signalling effect for other projects of this kind and for individuals and organisations associated with (sub)-culture, art and creativity that allowed the Prinzessinnengarten to construct a citywide network of agents in support of its opposition and in congruence with its interests. Although the “networks of associations” encompass various actors, I identified two with significant social, cultural or symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1983) and “decision-making capacities”: the Initiative StadtNeudenken and the mayor of the local borough Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg. The ISN helped the Prinzessinnengarten during the struggle in three regards: to build further support for their position, to influence public discourses to their advantage and to provide them with necessary information. The initiative is based on an extensive network of “cultural producers, architects, academics and organisations”, which they mobilised during the conflict to support the Prinzessinnengarten and which helped in constituting relevant “networks of associations” (ISN n/d). Given the academic background of many members of the initiative and their high degree of cultural capital, they were able to provide a substantial account of Berlin’s Liegenschaftspolitik of the past years and communicate a clear vision for a realigned public policy. They were the ones who labelled the community garden as a “test case” and significantly influenced public discourses. Moreover, the initiative organised Round Tables with members of the city parliament to discuss criteria for a realigned Liegenschaftspolitik where they brought up the case of the Prinzessinnengarten and gained support from local politicians. In addition, the initiative provided a valuable source of information for the community garden with regards to political structures, the dynamics of the public policy and the situation of other projects [2].
Defending local interests implies the challenge of attempting to influence state agencies. Cox (1998: 7) suggests that a good way to exercise influence over state agencies is to incorporate them into the “network of associations”. In this context, the support and acknowledgement on the part of the local borough and in particular from its mayor, Franz Schulz, for the Prinzessinnengarten can not be underestimated, considering his political power and knowledge. The reason for his positive attitude, says Schulz, is based on both the garden’s fascinating integrative concept and its provision of a forum to discuss urban development and political issues [3]. Although the site at Moritzplatz was already in the hands of the Property Fund by the time of the conflict, the borough arguably still had a high degree of influence due to its power of decision regarding the land development plan. According to the existing plan the plot of land was defined as low site density and potential development was relatively limited. Knowing that the development plan would be the only instrument to prevent or at least delay a successful privatisation of the site, the mayor refused to make any changes and thus played for time in order to provide the community garden with the opportunity to strengthen its positions through various tactical approaches [3]. The exchange of information between the community garden and the mayor was very frequent and the Prinzessinnengarten was well informed about the latest news and in a good position to react. Furthermore, the mayor strongly influenced political discourses by strategically resorting to the media and local press and providing them information, which would generate further pressure on the Property Fund and the city’s finance department.

7.2 JUMPING SCALES AND TACTICAL APPROACHES

In the context of scale politics in which the spatiality of a conflict is an enduring process of negotiation between political opponents, Jonas (1994: 258, cited in Smith and Kurtz 2003), detects a tendency on the part of powerful actors to exert influence over weaker actors by circumscribing their activities to “a manageable scale”. This attempt is also apparent in the case of the Prinzessinnengarten, where local politicians argued that the community garden is based on partial interests without having a citywide value or impact. This “social construction of community gardens” as a “combination of public catalyst and private resource” prevents their consideration as a “public good” to be protected in the public domain (Lawson 2004: 151). Lawson (ibid) notes that community gardens are predominantly associated with private objectives and are not on a par with communal resources due to the difference in maintenance responsibility and active participation compared to usual types of open green spaces.
In order to transcend the containment strategies of local politicians and challenge the prevailing notion of “local scale” and “private realm”, the Prinzessinnengarten started an extensive public relations campaign with the title “Let it grow” and resorted to three major tactics to “jump scales” and enlarge the “network of associations”. First, the Prinzessinnengarten sent a letter to the Berlin Senate and started a petition to demonstrate its status as a public good and to link the struggle to broader political and planning issues. In this context, social media such as Facebook and Twitter were mobilised as sources to receive support from non-local audiences. Second, the community garden held several public events in the garden in order to raise awareness about the struggle and to attract the attention of the media. Third, the garden started local tours with members of the city parliament to convince them of the community garden’s potential. In the following, each of the tactics of the garden’s politics of scale will be analysed in greater depth.

7.2.1 OPEN LETTER AND PETITION

A letter addressed to the Berlin Senate with the title “What is the future of the Prinzessinnengarten? What will become of “beautiful and wild” Berlin? was the first tactic employed by the community garden in order to engage the sympathy of members of the city parliament and to link the problematic situation of the garden with Berlin’s announced realigned Liegenschaftspolitik (Prinzessinnengärten 2012a). The title of the letter refers to a statement of Berlin’s mayor, Klaus Wowereit, who noted in his government declaration that Berlin’s “creativity, beauty and wildness” are the city’s resources and the reason for millions of tourists to visit the city (Wowereit 2012). Using this reference in the headline implies an indirect claim for political action to protect what is promoted as a “tourist attraction” and economic asset and supports the analysis made in chapter 6.2.

In order to convince the Berlin Senate of the Prinzessinnengarten’s value, the community garden listed its benefits and contributions to the neighbourhood and the city and highlighted the countless number of acknowledgements on the part of officials and the media by quoting the most valuable statements. Moreover, the letter aimed to unite the fragmented landscape of individual projects in one voice in order to add weight to their claims and bring more agents to join their “network of associations”. Accordingly, the community garden describes its uncertain situation as “exemplary for the threat of free spaces and the opportunities they
entail” and seeks planning security for the garden and other forms of social engagements, thus speaking not only on its own behalf but also including the many other projects of this kind facing similar problems (Prinzessinnengärten 2012a). Simultaneously, the Prinzessinnengarten linked its situation to the existing political debate about Berlin’s Liegenschaftspolitik, arguing that “the struggle at Moritzplatz provides the opportunity to implement the suggested realignment of the Liegenschaftspolitik of the Berlin Senate” (ibid).

Alongside the open letter, the community garden started a petition to overcome the containment strategies of local politicians and to reveal its citywide impact.

“We had to reveal that the Berlin Senate is wrong when it believes that the garden concerns only 40 people and is not a public good and in the public interest. That’s why we started the petition, to demonstrate that the garden does reflect the general public interest, which goes far beyond the local site” [2].

Knowing about the potential of social media, the Prinzessinnengarten made use of Facebook and Twitter to reach and inform the general public about the situation of the garden and to distribute the petition. To the surprise of all, the community garden collected 30,000 signatures within only a few weeks’ time and was able to prove local politicians wrong in their assumption about the garden’s limited impact. About 80% of the signatures were thereby gained over social media emphasising their potential and role in politics of scale and for the establishment of “networks of associations”. While the sheer amount of signatures was already a huge success, it is also the spatial dimension of support and the submitted comments that added even more weight to the petition and helped illuminate the meaning attached to the Prinzessinnengarten. In order to shed further light on the results of the petition, the following two chapters will provide an analysis of the spatial distribution of the supporters as well as their provided reasons for support.

7.2.1.1 THE SPATIAL DIMENSION OF SUPPORT

The spatial distribution of the support reveals – in contrast to assumptions of local politicians - that the project’s scope and acceptance is by no means limited to the local area but spreads across the city covering all twelve of Berlin’s boroughs, although with varying frequency (Appendix A3). 42% and thus the majority of support derives from residents of the borough
Friedrichshain-Kreugberg, where the community garden is located, highlighting its strong localised impact and popularity. Though, striking in this respect is the fact that a vast number of supporters are *not* residents of the local borough but live far away from the garden’s location. This is particularly interesting in the light of the existing literature, which highlights the local impact of community gardens without investigating their spatial scope beyond the neighbourhood level.

While the borough level provides a good overview about the citywide impact of the *Prinzessinnengarten*, the spatial scale of the district level allows more detailed conclusions. For this reason, the postcodes provided in the petition have been allocated to the correlating districts and have been mapped in 3D to depict the distribution of support. In order to illustrate potential differences between online and hand-written signatures, two separate maps have been designed, including a flag that indicates the location of the community garden. Figure 9 and Figure 10 indicate that the support is predominantly concentrated around the garden and derives from individuals living in the neighbourhood or in the immediate vicinity. Most of the supporters are residents of the local district Berlin Kreuzberg, which is coloured in green, or live in bordering inner-city districts, such as Friedrichshain, Neukölln, Prenzlauer Berg and Berlin Mitte.

Fig. 9 Spatial analysis of support from hand-written comments, Source: Own Representation in collaboration with Katy Schroth and Julia Kattinger.
A comparison of the two maps reveals that the supporters who signed online (Figure 10) are spatially dispersed in the city and come partly from districts lying outside the inner city or at the border of Berlin’s metropolitan area. Figure 9, in contrast demonstrates that supporters who signed by hand in the community garden tend to live in highly dense inner-city districts, which are well connected to the community garden. While this difference might be explained by the distribution in the sample containing only 1/3 of hand-written signatures, it indicates simultaneously that some of the supporters, particularly those signing online, might not visit the garden frequently but find the project worth protecting because of other reasons that will be explored in the following chapter.

Rosol (2010a) and Baier (2013) argue that community gardens critically address broader issues and serve at times as the locus for direct and indirect political claims and criticism. Given the context in which the petition was started, an analysis of the comments provided by the supporters offers a unique lens with which to explore the meaning and role of the Prinzessinnengarten for Berlin’s residents. While a few studies analyse the motivations of people engaging in community gardens (Armstrong 2000), there is a lack of research applying...
quantitative methods to understand the meaning attached to urban community gardens and why people support them in local conflicts.

7.2.1.2 A REQUEST FOR FREE SPACES

Given the explorative nature of this investigation, an inductive approach has been applied to understand the meaning attached to the *Prinzessinnengarten* and to reveal patterns of argumentation. Consequently, the developed categories derive from the comments provided by the supporters and have been clustered thematically. Figure 11 shows the distribution of categories and delivers a surprising and interesting picture.

![Figure 11: Distribution of categories based on petition analysis, Source: Own Representation.](image)

In accordance with current assumptions in the literature dealing with urban community gardens, 24%\(^\text{17}\) of the supporters associate the *Prinzessinnengarten* with “nature and green space” and demand more of these spaces in a high-density city. However, the *Prinzessinnengarten* represents more than just that and embodies a strong political dimension as suggested by Rosol (2010), serving as a barometer of public opinion. Several categories like “free spaces for culture and creativity”, “political issues” or “urban development issues”

\(^{17}\) The percentage derives from the total number of comments of each category divided by 600 (according to the sample). The total percentage of all categories is more than 100% due to the fact that more than one category could be allocated to each comment.
demonstrate that a great number of Berlin residents oppose contemporary dynamics in urban planning and politics and its impact on the urban realm. In line with the community garden’s politics of scale and its attempt to expand the scope of the struggle by addressing broader issues, the results reflect that Berlin’s citizen perceive the garden’s situation as emblematic for the prospect of (sub-)cultural and creative projects in the city and for the direction that public policy will take.\(^{18}\)

This explains why the preservation of “free spaces for culture and creativity” is, at 27.8% of the responses, the most frequently mentioned reason given. The category encompasses the desire for what Lynch (1975) terms “grounds for utopia” – spaces where new possibilities for using and designing urban spaces can be explored. It is a claim for re-making and re-imagining spaces through “unconventional” urban interventions and the quest for non-commodified spaces where creativity can unfold. The notion of “free spaces” mirrors many of Crawford’s (2012) suggested principles of DIY urban practices and confirms their need in a context of current approaches in city planning. In the petition, the desire for such spaces as symbolised by the Prinzessinnengarten is often expressed in relation to Berlin’s unique landscape of self-initiated, creative projects which are perceived as a “unique feature of Berlin” by 6.3% of the supporters.

“Berlin needs more free spaces for creativity and experimentation, particularly in the inner-city. Otherwise, Berlin will become random and replaceable like so many other metropolises” (anonymous 2012a)

The category “political issues” is particularly interesting, as it refers precisely to Berlin’s Liegenschaftspolitik and can be understood as a criticism of the privatisation of common land and properties based on exchange value. Many residents argue that Berlin does not need more “office buildings, freehold flats or places covered with concrete” but a policy that applies a balanced approach to common land and properties and does justice to the diversity of the city. In this context, it is claimed that city-owned land and properties should not be treated as a commodity but regarded as a “public good” serving the public interest.

\(^{18}\) It should be considered that the perception of the residents might have been partly influenced by the garden’s tactics and narratives.
“I am interested in a more socially oriented and sustainable Liegenschaftspolitik that improves the quality of life of its citizen and considers projects that don’t have a monetary value” (anonymous 2012b)

Moreover, urban development and planning issues have been specifically addressed by 12.2% of the supporters. The category embraces several dimensions of planning and is closely related to political issues and free spaces. The essence of this category implies a fundamental critique of current tendencies of commercialisation and homogenisation of urban (public) spaces, particularly in inner-city neighbourhoods, having a detrimental impact on the social and cultural complexity of the city. For many, the community garden seems to represent “a true alternative and future-oriented use of vacant spaces”, arguing that “urban planners should learn their lesson from this project and reorient their focus away from pure commercialisation towards sustainable urban planning” (anonymous 2012c). For about 13% of the people, the Prinzessinnengarten represents the opportunity for civic participation and bottom-up neighbourhood development, uncovering the desire of many urban inhabitants to shape and develop a part of the city according to their wishes, needs and imaginations (Pagano 2013). This aspiration expresses on the one hand the dissatisfaction with traditional planning approaches and offers on the other hand a space for new social relations.

While the results include the analysis of both online and hand-written comments, a closer look reveals significant differences and indicates that people who signed the petition on postcards within the garden are concerned about other issues than those who signed online which might be related to the difference in residency between the two groups of people (Appendix A4 and A5). Supporters commenting on postcards wrote rather shorter comments and assessed the garden predominantly as a “great project” that is worth protecting without providing more detail. The category “nature and green space” was mentioned second most frequently and seems to be related to the relatively low amount of green spaces in the local borough. In contrast, the online comments demonstrate a completely different picture. Here, the political dimension is more distinctive and issues around free spaces, politics and urban development as well as green space are predominantly associated with the Prinzessinnengarten. In general, the online comments were more detailed and of a more analytical nature, giving a clearer picture of the meaning and role of the garden or of current tendencies in planning and politics.
7.2.2 PUBLIC EVENTS AND LOCAL TOURS

“A petition is a good step but is not enough. It is a necessary precondition for a rather positive attitude of the member of the city parliament towards the community garden but other things need to follow to truly convince them and to change something” [3].

Following the mayor’s suggestion, the Prinzessinnengarten resorted to a second tactic and held public events and panel discussions in situ to raise awareness among the local population and to gain valuable news coverage. Compared to community garden advocates in New York City, which had to protest in public spaces in order to attract media attention, the media coverage around the Prinzessinnengarten was always very extensive and positive and the Prinzessinnengarten did not have to rely on using other symbolic public spaces (Smith and Kurtz 2003). For panel discussions, the community garden resorted to its “networks of associations” and invited only people it was already collaborating with and who would be able to communicate a clear vision for the prospect of the site and the development of the city [2]. The panel discussion with the title “Where does the beautiful and wild Berlin goes?”, for instance, involved professors for urban development from the Technical University Berlin, representatives from the Initiative StadtNeudenken, the mayor of the local borough and others in order to stimulate a constructive discussion about the situation of the garden and the controversial Liegenschaftspolitik (Prinzessinnengärten 2012b). Given the substantial amount of press coverage both in the national and international context, the campaign “Let it grow” was successful in achieving broader visibility and informing Berlin residents about the case.

Knowing that many of the politicians prioritising exchange over use value had never visited the community garden before and do not understand its essential nature and value, the third tactic taken by the Prinzessinnengarten was to invite local politicians and members of the city parliament to visit the project at Moritzplatz. By giving them a tour through the garden and explaining the variety of smaller initiatives and ideas it encompasses, the garden intended to convince at least some of the politicians of the potential of the space. The mayor of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg joined the tour as well and said retrospectively “I remember, it was wonderful weather, and the Prinzessinnengarten has invited members of the city parliament to visit the garden. They entered the gate to the garden, have been served with fresh elderflower
juice and they were immediately hooked by the beauty of the garden and one after each other backed down” [3] (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Entrance gate to the Prinzessinnengarten at Moritzplatz, Source: Phil Dera, 2013.

7.3 CONDITIONS OF SUCCESS AND PROSPECT

After the successful construction of “spaces of engagement” including the local and citywide coalition that was formed and the tactics that were applied, the mayor filed an application to the Property Fund, asking to return the plot of land to the borough and to abstain from any privatisation. It was a request on the part of the mayor, which was exceptional and, under normal circumstances, would have been only successful in extremely urgent cases of infrastructure demand [3]. However, after months of intensive campaigning and increased pressure on local politicians generated on the part of the media and the vast number of supporters, the Property Fund agreed to return the site to the borough of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg\(^\text{19}\). Consequently, the Prinzessinnengarten successfully managed to prevent the privatisation of urban space and secured a five-year prospect. Considering the conditions of

\(^{19}\) After months of waiting, the local borough received also approval from the Berlin Senate.
this success, it appears to be a combination of three major aspects: the use of multiple tactics which raised the scope of the struggle from the local site to the city and increased public interest; the extensive “network of associations” that included people with “command of resources” and “decision-making capacities” and the specific point in time when the high degree of dissatisfaction among both Berlin residents and certain local politicians culminated in the conflict over the Prinzessinnengarten. Though, whether the Prinzessinnengarten’s success will in fact have any signalling effect for the announced realigned policy and the direction it takes remains open. As things stand, the case appears to be rather exceptional, as essential criteria and political will seem to be missing in order to achieve a wholehearted reorientation, which would do justice to the city’s complexity and diversity. While the controversy over the community garden triggered a highly visible and heated debate about a more adequate public policy, the interest has gradually declined over the past months and the number of newspaper articles addressing this issue has decreased.

8 CONCLUSION

The objective of this research was to analyse the land use conflict over the Prinzessinnengarten and to reveal the various dimensions it encompasses. Essentially, though, the conflict was not about the urban community garden per se but served as a locus for public opinion and was emblematic for other projects of this kind, for the prospect of (sub-)culture and creativity in the city and whether spaces of difference would be accepted. Ultimately, the local conflict was inherently tied to Berlin’s Liegenschaftspolitik and demonstrates a great dissatisfaction among the local population toward contemporary dynamics in urban planning and politics in the city. The claims expressed by the Prinzessinnengarten and its advocates imply a substantial critique of the policy’s one-dimensional practices and its detrimental effects for the “sustainability of the urban realm” (Groth and Corjin 2005: 522). Their vision of the city’s development is driven by a more holistic and balanced approach pertaining to the handling of common land and properties and suggests both a more adequate analysis of current dynamics and the opportunity for alternative ways of thinking. This more “complex” vision derives from the need for use value projects and uncontrolled, non-commodified places in the city, where social relations can be formed and new concepts for urban spaces explored.
I demonstrated that the issue of incommensurability between use and exchange value is integral to the conflict, though compared to the struggles in New York City it expands the border of community gardens and embraces other projects of this kind. While the city’s finance department justified the announced sale of the plot of land with Berlin’s poor fiscal situation and the need to achieve budgetary consolidation through the return, the Prinzessinnengarten emphasised the use value of the project by highlighting its benefits and positive qualities. It was a request for developing adequate criteria to preserve projects, which, although benefitting the general public, do not necessarily bring a quantifiable monetary value and thus can not compete on the free market. This encompasses the notion that socio-cultural projects, which are rooted in and benefit the neighbourhood, should not be treated as a “temporary” option but rather should be afforded a long-term prospect even if a “higher and better use” occurs.

Moreover, the results of the petition illustrate the need for “free” spaces in the city as exemplified by the Prinzessinnengarten, which “nourish the vision of a more experimental culture” (Groth and Corjin 2005). In contrast to current assumptions regarding the spatial scope and impact of urban community gardens, the analysis of the petition generated valuable new insights in this regard, revealing that the Prinzessinnengarten was not only backed up by a sizeable amount of individuals (30,000) but was also spatially supported by citizens coming from all over the city. On the one hand, this is a reflection of the increasing dissatisfaction with Berlin’s public policy, and epitomises the desire for socially constructed, non-commodified spaces in the city. On the other hand, it implies a general critique of the appropriation of art and (sub-)culture as an “economic asset” and was voiced by precisely those people which Florida labels as the “creative class” and who have gradually taken issue with Berlin’s privatisation policy and its destruction of the city’s creative capital (Novy and Colomb 2012).

Considering the means that have been employed by the Prinzessinnengarten to make their claims heard, the conflict demonstrates the relevance of politics of scale and constituting relevant “networks of associations”. The community garden resorted to numerous tactics including public events, a petition and an open letter to the Berlin Senate in which they provided an independent analysis of the problem and formulated demands for a re-orientation of public policy. Furthermore, the community garden was able to establish a local and citywide coalition with diverse urban actors, though it was the incorporation of actors having
a “command of resources”, such as local politicians and academics, which proved to be particularly advantageous. It is through such coalition building that the *Prinzessinnengarten* was able to “cultivate and communicate” a clear vision for the city’s development and became a serious player in the public debate “touching upon more complex exigencies than the spatially delimited conflict encountered” (Groth and Corjin 2005: 523). What is noteworthy, however, is the fact that, even though the objectives of the *Prinzessinnengarten* and the *Initiative StadtNeudenken* conflict with dominant paradigms in planning and politics, they took a deliberately pro-active and transformative stance and were interested in fostering a different type of public debate.

The urban community garden managed successfully to confront the privatisation of the site and to secure the space with its numerous socio-cultural and ecological functions for the next five years. The conditions for this “success”, I argue, derive from the specific constellation of actors involved in the network, the successful campaign – which managed to increase the national and international popularity of the garden – and the specific “point in time” at which the conflict emerged when dissatisfaction with the *Liegenschaftspolitik* was high. The essence of the conflict also revealed that urban community gardens (in Germany) can no longer be understood in the conventional sense. Instead, they epitomise a practice that relates in many respects to the concept that academics have recently termed “DIY urbanism”, which is closely associated with the notion of free spaces – that is, spaces that provide the required autonomy for creativity to unfold in the remaking of urban space.
A1 LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Name of Interviewee</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date of Interview</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[1]</td>
<td>Leonie Baumann</td>
<td>Initiator of the Initiative StadtNeudenken</td>
<td>03.06.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[3]</td>
<td>Franz Schulz</td>
<td>Mayor of the local borough Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg</td>
<td>25.06.2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[4]</td>
<td>Marit Rosol</td>
<td>Senior Lecturer at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main</td>
<td>03.07.2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A2 CODEBOOK AND CATEGORY SYSTEM

Coding instructions and general remarks:

• Before coding, the entire comment has to be read.
• It is coded whenever the comment includes information of the categories (see definition of the categories).
• It is important that only information provided in the comments are taken into consideration and are coded. Any possible background knowledge of the coder is not considered.

Categories

Explanation: It will be coded on the level of the semantic unit and on the word level. Each category can be assigned only once per comment. Each category includes examples from the petition.

Number of coder:

Date:

V1 Nature and Green Space

Comments that include information about people’s stance towards green spaces or nature in the city will be assigned to this category. Comments including synonyms, such as “oasis” or “green lung” will be also taken into consideration.

*e.g. “More Nature in the City!”, “Berlin needs more green spaces”, “Because we need more green lungs like this”*

V2 Civic Participation and Neighbourhood Development

Comments referring to statements where people express their opinion towards neighbourhood development, civic participation and engagement will be coded.

*e.g. “Great example for civic engagement”, “I want to develop my neighbourhood according to my own imaginations and the Prinzessinnengärten provides me with this opportunity”, “That’s a vibrant and important place to participate”*

V3 “Free” Spaces for Culture and Creativity

Comments that refer to spaces in the city, which allow in any kind of form creative, cultural, political, social or self-made activities will be considered. Statements including information about un-planned or non-commodified spaces, which provide room for experimentation, will be allocated to this category.

*e.g. “An important cultural project”, “A free space for creativity and political expression”, “Every city needs free spaces like the Prinzessinnengarten”, “not everything need to be planned, leave room for creativity”*
V4 Spaces for Recreation

Comments that provide information about people’s stance towards spaces for recreation and relaxation will be coded.

e. g. “It’s a place for relaxation and recreation in my immediate vicinity”, “the atmosphere is so relaxing, there are not many place like this”, “I always go here after work if I need a break from the busy city”.

V5 Spaces for Education

Statements that refer to spaces for learning and knowledge exchange with regards to nature, food production, environment, ecology etc. will be considered.

e. g. “I love this initiative because it allows people to learn more about nature and food production”, “It provides people and particularly children with the possibility to grow food and to learn more about what we eat daily”

V6 Great Project

Comments indicating that residents like the project and want it to be preserved because it’s great or their favourite place will be taken into consideration.

e. g. “I love this project it needs to stay!”, “Its great and my favourite place”, “I always enjoy visiting the garden – keep it”

V7 Desire for Meeting Places and Social Interaction

Comments, where people express their interest in more social places in the city, where people can come together, interact; exchange ideas and meet will be allocated to this category.

e. g. “The Prinzessinnengarten symbolizes places where people can come together, interact and exchange ideas”, “A truly social space”, “People from different backgrounds mingle here”

V8 Political Issues

Comments that imply a political dimension and refer to Berlin’s Liegenschaftspolitik, city-owned land and properties, privatisation etc. are coded.

e.g. “The threat posed to the garden is an example that the Liegenschaftspolitik of the Senate is not oriented towards common welfare”, “A sale might bring short-term revenue, but will have a negative impact in the long run”, “Stop selling off the city!”

V9 Urban Development Issues

Statements referring to urban development and planning themes, such as uses of public spaces or vacant spaces, inner-city developments etc are considered.

e.g. “The Prinzessinnengarten is a perfect showcase how urban landscape should look like”, “The garden is one of Berlin’s most important urban planning projects in the city”, “We don’t need more shopping center, and over-planned spaces, but free spaces and alternatives”, “We have enough places for consumption”
V10 Unique feature of Berlin

All comments indicating that the community garden contributes to and reflects the unique feature of Berlin and its atmosphere are taken into consideration.

*E.g.* “I sign the petition because I don’t want Berlin to become like other cities”, “The destruction of projects like the Prinzessinnengarten make Berlin less attractive”, “That is Berlin – preserve its character”.

V11 Sustainability

Comments that either directly involve the term “sustainability” or claim a more forward-looking or future-oriented approach will be considered.

*E.g.* “This space is an important foundation for the sustainable city”, “Such a green oasis should get displaced? What is with sustainability?”, “This is an forward-looking use of urban space”

V12 Location Factor

Statements indicating that people perceive the Prinzessinnengarten as location factor for Berlin in general and Berlin Kreuzberg in particular will be considered. This might include remarks such as economic factor, tourist attraction etc.

*E.g.* “The Prinzessinnengarten makes the difference”, “This project is important for Berlin”, “The Prinzessinnengarten is an important economic factor for the city”, “The community garden makes Berlin interesting for tourists”.

V13 Food and Health

Comments that refer to food, food production, quality of food, health, health factor etc will be coded.

*E.g.* “The city should grow more organic food”, “Food that you have grown yourself is the best food”, “Garden like this provide us with true, healthy and organic food”, “I love bees and good food”

V14 Quality of Life

Comments that refer either directly to the term “quality of life” of or describe it analogously will be coded.

*E.g.* “Project like this make the city liveable”, “Preserve quality of life!”
A3 DISTRIBUTION OF SIGNATURES ACCORDING TO BERLIN’S BOROUGHS

![Bar chart showing the distribution of signatures according to Berlin's boroughs.](image)

A4 DISTRIBUTION OF CATEGORIES ACCORDING TO HAND-WRITTEN COMMENTS

![Radar chart showing the distribution of categories based on hand-written comments.](image)

- Desire for nature and green spaces
- Quality of Life
- Food and health
- Location factor
- Sustainability
- Unique feature of Berlin
- Urban Development Issues
- Political issues
- Civic participation
- Free spaces for culture and creativity
- Recreation
- Education
- Great project
- Meeting place

Total number of comments:

50
Distribution of categories according to online comments

- Desire for nature and green spaces
- Civic participation
- Free spaces for culture and creativity
- Recreation
- Education
- Great project
- Meeting place
- Political issues
- Unique feature of Berlin
- Urban development issues
- Sustainability
- Location factor
- Food and health
- Quality of Life
- Total number of comments


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n/a (n/d) Kreuzberg: Culture and creativity at Moritzplatz, (WWW), (http://www.visitberlin.de/en/feature/kreuzberg-0, accessed 15.08.2013).


